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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Department of Inductive Biblical Studies

OT 630
January 2000

Minor Prophets (IBS)

Bauer

I. General Description

This course seeks to strengthen the student in the "inductive method" of biblical study, and to direct this interpretive approach to the Minor Prophets.

II. Course Objectives

- A. Methodology. The emphasis will be upon the observation and interpretation of books as wholes. By the end of the course, the student should be able to do the following:
 - 1. As regards observation:
 - a. Survey books as wholes, including
 - (1) Identifying the general materials of the book (biographical, ideological, historical, etc.) and the specific materials, giving a brief title to each chapter whereby the contents of that chapter may be recalled by association;
 - (2) Locating the major units and sub-units in the book and identifying the main structural relationships operative between these units;
 - (3) Asking a few interpretive questions based upon each major structural law observed;
 - (4) Identifying the key verses and strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole;
 - (5) Locating data bearing on such higher critical questions as the author, place and date of writing, occasion for writing, recipients, etc.;
 - (6) Noting other major impressions relating to the book as a whole.
 - b. Survey of individual sections or segments, including
 - (1) Giving a brief title to each paragraph of the segment whereby its contents may be recalled by association;
 - (2) Locating the major groupings of paragraphs (units) within the segment and the main structural relationships operative between these units;

- (3) Asking a few interpretive questions relating to each major structural relationship observed;
 - (4) Identifying the key verses or strategic areas which provide insight into the segment as a whole;
 - (5) Identifying the literary form (s) employed in the segment.
 - c. Observe the details of individual paragraphs and verses, including
 - (1) Noting the important and/or difficult terms, sentence structure, and the relations between sentences and groups of sentences;
 - (2) Asking detailed interpretive questions based on these observations.
 2. As regards interpretation:
 - a. Answer the most significant questions raised in the observation of paragraphs and verses, including
 - (1) Identifying the most significant questions asked, based upon importance, difficulty, and interest;
 - (2) Noting the types of evidence available for answering each interpretive question, and employing this evidence to answer each question selected.
 - b. Integrate the answers to the questions in a progressive fashion so as to synthesize first the paragraph, then the section or segment, and ultimately the book as a whole. This synthesis involves, inter alia, the answering of the questions raised during the surveys of segments and of books.
 3. As regards evaluation and application: Find the truths or principles which are transcultural, and relate them to appropriate contemporary situations.
 4. As regards correlation: Relate the theology of the book to the teaching of other biblical materials by the same author, to the Old Testament as a whole (or, with New Testament books, to the New Testament as a whole), and finally to the Bible as a whole, thus moving toward a biblical theology.
- B. Content. The student should be able to do the following:
1. Think through the contents of each book of the Minor Prophets studied without recourse to the printed text;
 2. Identify significant passages in the Minor Prophets and interpret them contextually;
 3. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Minor Prophets;
 4. Describe thoroughly the meaning and development of major themes in the Minor Prophets, citing individual passage and other specific data to support conclusions;

5. Discuss the historical and religious background of the Minor Prophets, demonstrating a general knowledge of critical problems regarding the Minor Prophets and an ability to use this data in the interpretation of the Minor Prophets.
- C. Attitude. The student should:
1. Appreciate the value of sound methodology for the interpretation of the biblical materials, resulting in a desire to apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
 2. Desire to make the Minor Prophets the object of intensive and creative study throughout life;
 3. Intend to employ seriously the Minor Prophets in preaching and teaching within the context of the church.

III. Course Texts

- A. Required Texts:
1. Revised Standard Version of the Bible or New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
 2. Biblical Resources for Ministry, by David R. Bauer
- B. Collateral Texts:
1. Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, by Brevard Childs
 2. The Old Testament: An Introduction, by Rolf Rendtorff
- C. Recommended Texts:
1. A History of Israel, 3rd ed., by John Bright
 2. A History of Prophecy in Israel, by Joseph Blenkinsopp
 3. Methodical Bible Study, by Robert A. Traina

IV. Course Requirements

- A. The completion of the following lessons in writing, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. All lessons are to be handed in at the end of the class period on the day designated. No late papers will be accepted save in cases in which permission is granted by the instructor based on emergency.
- B. Punctual attendance at all class sessions. Because of the importance of class attendance, and because of government regulations regarding student loans, a record of attendance will be taken at each class session. Absence at more than two class sessions will result in final grade penalty, and absence at more than four class sessions will result in loss of credit for the course. Exceptions may be granted based on emergency upon consultation with the instructor.

- C. A careful reading of the assigned portions of the required and collateral texts, including "Prophecy," pp. 477-95, in Anchor Bible Dictionary.
- D. A final examination based on the objectives of the course.
- E. For students who have not heretofore completed the second required IBS course, the viewing of the videotaped presentation on method within one week of the beginning of the term.

V. Course Evaluation

- A. Assignments - 75%
- B. Final Exam - 25%

VI. Lessons

Lesson 1. Methodology.

1. Review Methodical Bible Study, by Robert A. Traina, by scanning the contents to re-acquaint (or acquaint) yourself with its content.
2. Read one of the following volumes, and write a 3-5 page critical review of the book:
 - a. Robert A. Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative
 - b. Edward P. Blair, The Bible and You
 - c. Charles A. Eberhardt, The Bible in the Making of Ministers
 - d. Irving A. Jensen, Independent Bible Study
 - e. Howard T. Kuist, These Words Upon They Heart
 - f. William C. Lincoln, Personal Bible Study, and G. Campbell Morgan, The Study and Teaching of the English Bible
 - g. Donald G. Miller, The Way to Biblical Preaching
 - h. David L. Thompson, Bible Study That Works and Irving A. Jensen, Enjoy Your Bible
 - i. Robert A. Traina, "Inductive Bible Study Reexamined in the Light of Contemporary Hermeneutics," in God's Word for Today, pp. 53-109, ed. Wayne McCown and J. Massey; and Robert A. Traina, "Hermeneutical Values in the Writings of Wilhelm Dilthey," The Asbury Seminarian 22 (April, 1968): 8-13
 - j. Oletta Wald, The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study, and Wald, The Joy of Teaching Discovery in Bible Study.

THE BOOK OF JOEL

Lesson 2. Survey of the Book of Joel

Read the entire book through at one sitting several times.

1. Identify the general and specific materials of the book, giving a brief title to each chapter.
2. Locate the main units and sub-units in the book, and identify the major structural relationships operative in the book as a whole.
3. Ask a few interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed.
4. Identify the key verses and strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of representation of major structural relationships identified.
5. Note data bearing on such higher critical questions as the author, place and date of writing, recipients, unity of the book, etc.
6. Note other major impressions relating to the book as a whole.

Lesson 3. Survey of the Segment: Joel 2:28-3:21

Read the entire segment through at one sitting several times.

1. Give a brief title to each paragraph whereby its contents may be recalled by association.
2. Locate the main units and sub-units within the segment and the major structural relationships operative in the segment as a whole.
3. Ask a few interpretive questions directed toward each major structural relationship observed.
4. Identify the key verses or strategic areas which provide insight into the segment as a whole.
5. Identify the literary form(s) employed in the segment.
6. Note other major impressions relating to the segment as a whole.

Lesson 4. Detailed Observation: Joel 3:14-15

Examine Joel 3:14-15 in terms of a detailed observation. Use MBS, pp. 31-36, 40-49, 72-79, and class handout as a guide. Ask interpretive questions directed toward each observation made.

Lesson 5. Interpretation: Joel 3:14-15

Interpret Joel 3:14-15 by selecting two or three of the most important questions raised in your detailed observation of the passage and by employing relevant exegetical determinants to answer these questions.

Lesson 6. Evaluation and Application: Joel 3:14-15

1. Having interpreted Joel 3:14-15, evaluate the passage in order to determine which teachings, if any, in this passage are transcendent (i.e., can legitimately be applied to other times and settings, including our

- own), and which are so exclusively bound to the original setting as to be no longer directly applicable. Give evidence for your conclusions.
2. Having identified the transcendent truth(s) of the passage, apply the truth(s) to specific situations or concerns in your own life or in the lives of persons to whom you might minister. Be precise, specific, penetrating, and original in your applications.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

- Lesson 7. Survey of the Book of Obadiah
Survey the Book of Obadiah, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.
- Lesson 8. Interpretation of the Book of Obadiah
Interpret the Book of Obadiah by answering this question: What is the message of the Book of Obadiah?
- Lesson 9. Evaluation and Application of the Book of Obadiah
1. Having interpreted the Book of Obadiah, evaluate the message of the book to determine if the message as a whole, or dimensions of that message, are transcendent (i.e., of such a nature that they can legitimately be applied to other times and settings, including our own), or so exclusively bound to the book's original setting that they are no longer directly relevant to other times and places. Give evidence for your conclusions.
 2. Having identified the transcendent truths of the book, apply these truths to specific situations in your own life or in the lives of people to whom you might minister. Be precise, specific, penetrating and original in your applications.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

- Lesson 10. Survey of the Book of Amos
Survey the Book of Amos, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.
- Lesson 11. Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Amos 1:3-2:16
1. Survey the segment Amos 1:3-2:16, following the suggestions under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
 - a. Analytical Interpretation
 - (1) What do these eight oracles have in common, and what is the meaning of each of these common features? What is the specific meaning of each oracle, and how does each oracle contribute to the author's overall presentation of sin and judgment in this segment?

- (2) Analyze (i.e., interpret the meaning of) Israel's sin as presented in this segment. In the process, note how the sins of, and judgment upon, the nations illumine Israel's sin and the consequences of Israel's sin.
 - b. Synthetic Interpretation
On the basis of the analytical interpretation above, describe the theology of sin and judgment in this segment.
3. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply the teachings in this segment.

- Lesson 12. Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Amos 3:1-6:16
1. Survey this section, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
 - a. Analytical Interpretation
On the basis of your survey of this section, identify the two or three most prominent themes in this material and explore their meaning.
 - b. Synthetic Interpretation
On the basis of your analytical interpretation above, describe the specific theological claims in this material and discuss how these individual claims are related to one another.
 - C. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply the teachings in this segment.

- Lesson 13. Survey, Interpretation and Evaluation and Application: Amos 7:1-9:15
1. Survey 7:1-9:8a, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
 - a. Analytical Interpretation
 - (1) What is the meaning of each vision, and how does each vision function in its immediate context?
 - (2) What is the meaning of the altercation between Amos and Amaziah in 7:10-17? Be analytical. How does this passage function in this section, and in the book as a whole?
 - (3) Interpret 9:8b-15 with special reference to the "booth of David" and the restoration of Israel in the land.
 - b. Synthetic Interpretation
 - (1) How do the visions recorded here function in the Book of Amos as a whole?
 - (2) How does 9:8b-15 relate to the rest of the Book of Amos? Why is it placed here, and what is the significance, or implications, of this ending to the book?

3. Evaluation and Application

a. Evaluation

Having interpreted Amos 9:13-15, evaluate the passage in order to determine which teachings, if any, in this passage are transcendent (i.e., can legitimately be applied in other times and settings, including our own), and which are so bound to the original setting as to be no longer directly applicable. Note especially how the specific teachings of this passage relate to New Testament perspectives.

b. Application

Having identified the transcendent truth(s) in this passage, apply it in specific ways to contemporary Christian life and thinking.

Lesson 14.

Synthesis of the Book of Amos

Synthesize the Book of Amos by outlining Amos' theology, especially his doctrine of God, of peoplehood (i.e., the people of God), and of justice.

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Lesson 15.

Survey of the Book of Hosea

Survey the Book of Hosea, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.

Lesson 16.

Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Hosea 1:2-3:5

1. Survey this section, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
2. Interpretation
 - a. Analytical Interpretation
 - (1) What, specifically and precisely, is the meaning of the descriptions of Hosea and Gomer, and of Yahweh and Israel? (In the process, note the ways in which chs. 4-14 inform the interpretation of chs. 1-3.) In what specific ways does the description of Hosea and Gomer illumine the relationship between Yahweh and Israel?
 - (2) What literary and theological problems are raised by this section? Possible solutions, with evidence?
 - b. Synthetic Interpretation

What is the theology of Israel's sin, of the covenant, and of Yahweh (especially Yahweh's relationship to his people) as presented here?
3. Evaluation and Application

Evaluate and apply the teachings here regarding Yahweh's covenant relationship with his people.

- Lesson 17. Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Hosea 4:1-14:9
1. Survey this section, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
On the basis of your survey, identify two passages that represent major themes or issues in 4:1-14:9, and interpret these passages in such a way as to illumine the presentation of these major themes throughout 4:1-14:9. (Note especially the role of key verses/strategic areas in identifying these representative passages.)
 3. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply one of the passages you interpreted. Show how this could lead to (or form the basis of) a sermon or lesson plan.
- Lesson 18. Synthesis of Hosea
Describe (with evidence) the main message of the Book of Hosea, its chief significance for Hosea's listeners, and its implications for the rest of biblical revelation.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

- Lesson 19. Survey of the Book of Jonah
Survey the Book of Jonah, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.
- Lesson 20. Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application of the Book of Jonah
1. Interpretation
 - a. Analyze the character (i.e. person) of Jonah as set forth in this book. Be analytical. Be creative and penetrating, but be careful to root your conclusions in evidence from the book.
 - b. Interpret 4:1-11, and explore the ways in which this passage helps the reader to identify and understand the main issue(s) of the book.
 2. Evaluation and Application
On the basis of your interpretation of 4:1-11, evaluate and apply the passage. Show how this application could lead into (or form the basis of) a sermon or Bible study lesson.
- Lesson 21. Synthesis of the Book of Jonah
Discuss the major theological motifs of the Book of Jonah, and their relationship to one another.

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

- Lesson 22. Survey of the Book of Nahum
Survey the Book of Nahum, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.
- Lesson 23. Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application of the Book of Nahum
1. Interpretation
Analyze what is said about Assyria in this book. Analyze what is said about Yahweh in this book. How does this presentation of Yahweh help us to understand his actions toward Assyria? How do Yahweh's actions toward Assyria help us better to understand Yahweh's person, his relationship to Israel, and his relationship to the nations?
 2. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply the presentation of Yahweh's dealings with Assyria in this book.
- Lesson 24. Synthesis of the Book of Nahum
1. Describe the main theological affirmations of this book.
 2. How does this presentation of Yahweh's actions and attitude toward Nineveh relate to that which is found in Jonah? Correlate these two presentations so as to begin to work toward a canonical theology of Yahweh's dealings with evil persons or nations in the world.

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

- Lesson 25. Survey of the Book of Zephaniah
Survey the Book of Zephaniah, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.
- Lesson 26. Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application of the Book of Zephaniah
1. Interpretation
 - a. Identify all personal names, and locate all geographical references. Who was Zephaniah?
 - b. Study the indictments made by Zephaniah as well as the theological and historical assumptions upon which they rest.
 - c. What is the role in the Book of Zephaniah of the oracles against the nations in 2:4-15? What is the meaning of 3:8-20, especially in view of 1:7-18?
 2. Evaluation and Application. Evaluate and apply 3:8-20; in the process discuss issues involved in teaching or preaching this passage.
- Lesson 27. Synthesis of the Book of Zephaniah
What do you learn about "the Day of Yahweh" from this book?

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

- Lesson 28. Personal Adaptation of IBS Method: The Book of Habakkuk
1. Study the Book of Habakkuk, using the skills you have developed in observation, interpretation, and evaluation and application. Consider seriously ways of adapting the principles of inductive Bible study according to (1) your own judgments regarding the viability of the various specific "steps" you have learned in inductive Bible study; and (2) your own ways of thinking and processing. Note what "shortcuts" to the full-blown procedure which you have learned are possible without violating the integrity of the inductive process.
 2. Prepare to enter into class discussion on the meaning of the book, its relationship to other biblical revelation, and its meaning for the present.

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

- Lesson 29. Personal Adaptation of IBS Method: The Book of Haggai
1. Study the Book of Haggai, using the skills you have developed in observation, interpretation, and evaluation and application. Consider how to adapt the principles of inductive Bible study according to your own methodological judgments, mental processes, and time constraints (see above under Habakkuk).
 2. Prepare to enter into class discussion on the meaning of the book, its relationship to other biblical revelation, and its meaning for the present.

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

- Lesson 30. Survey of the Book of Zechariah
Survey the Book of Zechariah, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.

- Lesson 31. Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Zechariah 1:1-6:15
1. Survey 1:1-6:15, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
Using the survey as your basis, interpret 1:1-6:15 by either (1) identifying a key passage or strategic area and exploring its meaning and role within 1:1-6:15; or (2) selecting a major structural relationship and interpreting 1:1-6:15 by answering the questions under that relationship.
 3. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply the teachings you have discerned from your interpretation.

- Lesson 32. Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Zechariah 7:1-8:23
1. Survey 7:1-8:23, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
Using the survey as your basis, interpret 7:1-8:23 by either (1) identifying a key passage or strategic area and exploring its meaning and role within 7:1-8:23; or (2) selecting a major structural relationship and interpreting 7:1-8:23 by answering the questions under that relationship.
 3. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply the teachings you have discerned from your interpretation.

- Lesson 33. Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application: Zechariah 9:1-14:21
1. Survey 9:1-14:21, employing the steps set forth for the survey of segments under Lesson 3.
 2. Interpretation
 - a. Interpret 9:9-10, and note especially its function within 9:1-14:21 as a whole.
 - b. Explore fully the meaning of "that day," or "the day of Yahweh" in this material.
 3. Evaluation and Application
Evaluate and apply the notion of "the day of Yahweh" as presented here. Note especially how this concept as it is developed here relates to New Testament perspectives, and explore the ways it might enrich our understanding and appropriation of the New Testament eschatology.

- Lesson 34. Synthesis of the Book of Zechariah
Describe the major theological motifs in the Book of Zechariah and their dynamic relationship to one another in such a way as to begin to develop a theology of the Book of Zechariah.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

- Lesson 35. Survey of the Book of Malachi
Survey the Book of Malachi, following the suggestions under Lesson 2.

- Lesson 36. Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application of the Book of Malachi
1. Explore the meaning of Israel's sins and failings as presented in Malachi. Be as analytical and penetrating as possible. What problems, attitudes, and conceptions lie behind these sins? Is there a fundamental disposition that lies behind them all, and if so what is its meaning? How does Yahweh deal with each of these sins, as well as the underlying problems,

attitudes, and conceptions? In the process, note ways in which the structure of the book can help you answer these questions.

2. Evaluation and Application

On the basis of your interpretation of the book, evaluate and apply the message of Malachi.

Lesson 37.

Synthesis of the Book of Malachi

On the basis of your interpretation, synthesize the theology of Malachi, with special reference to the theology of sin, of Yahweh, of worship, of covenant, and of eschatology.

THE BOOK OF MICAH

Lesson 38.

Synthesis of Method: The Book of Micah

1. Survey the Book of Micah.
2. Interpret 7:18-20. In the process explore ways in which the structure of the book informs your interpretation of the passage.
3. Synthesize 7:18-20 with the rest of the Book of Micah by answering this question: How does the interpretation of 7:18-20, understood in light of its function in the structure of the book, illumine the meaning of the Book of Micah as a whole?
4. Evaluate and apply 7:18-20.

VII. Select Bibliography (on the prophets in general)

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